

Appl. No. 09/863,486
Amdt. dated April 18, 2005
Reply to Office action of January 18, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants have received the Office action dated January 18, 2005, in which the Examiner: 1) rejected claims 1 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Kirch (U.S. Pat. No. 6,324,161); and objected to claims 2-7 and 18-20 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten.

With this Response, Applicants have amended claims 1-2, 4-7 and 17. Also, Applicants added claims 21-28. Based on the amendments and arguments contained herein, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims.

I. CLAIM AMENDMENTS

The amendments to claim 2 and 4-7 are intended to correct typographical errors. The scope of claims 2 and 4-7 has not changed. In claims 1 and 17 references to "a)," "b)," and "c)," have been removed so as not to unintentionally narrow the claims, and in particular, so as not to imply that claim 17 is limited to the order in which the actions are listed.

II. § 102 REJECTIONS

Amended claim 1, in part, requires "a plurality of enterprises having agents that process multi-agent cooperative business transactions, wherein each agent is configured to autonomously determine whether to complete a transaction." Kirch does not teach or suggest these limitations.

Kirch teaches a redundant network configuration. If a failure occurs in a communication path of the network, the Kirch system redirects communications via another redundant path (see Abstract and Figures 3b and 3c). In contrast, claim 1 requires "agents that process multi-agent cooperative business transactions." Further, "each agent is configured to autonomously determine whether to complete a transaction." The redundant network components and redundant connections disclosed in Kirch simply do not teach or suggest these limitations. For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 1 and all claims that depend from claim 1 are allowable.

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Amended claim 17, in part, requires "starting a multi-agent cooperative business transaction between software agents of at least two enterprises." While Kirch teaches redundant network communications, Kirch does not teach or suggest "starting a multi-agent cooperative business transaction between software agents of at least two enterprises" as required in claim 17. For at least this reason, Applicants submit that claim 17 and all claims that depend from claim 17 are allowable.

III. NEW CLAIMS

Claim 21, in part, requires "a plurality of software agents that process multi-agent cooperative business transactions, wherein each agent is configured to autonomously make decisions that affect completion of a business transaction." Kirch does not teach or suggest "a plurality of software agents that process multi-agent cooperative business transactions" as required in claim 21. Further, Kirch does not teach or suggest "agents" that are "configured to autonomously make decisions that affect completion of a business transaction." For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 21 and all claims that depend from claim 21 are allowable.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

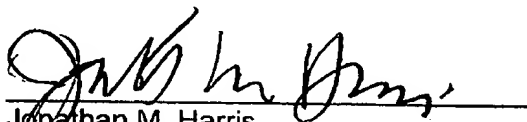
In the course of the foregoing discussions, Applicants may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. Moreover, it should be understood that there may be other distinctions between the claims and the cited art which have yet to be raised, but which may be raised in the future.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. It is believed that no extensions of time or fees are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of

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time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and any fees required (including fees for net addition of claims) are hereby authorized to be charged to Hewlett-Packard Development Company's Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonathan M. Harris
PTO Reg. No. 44,144
CONLEY ROSE, P.C.
(713) 238-8000 (Phone)
(713) 238-8008 (Fax)
ATTORNEY FOR APPLICANTS

HEWLETT-PACKARD COMPANY
Intellectual Property Administration
Legal Dept., M/S 35
P.O. Box 272400
Fort Collins, CO 80527-2400